

Tokyo Discourse, 4/21/1971

This intervention by Dr. Lacan took place on April 21, 1971 in Tokyo in the office of Kobundo editions, the publisher of the Japanese translation of the Écrits, during a meeting organized by Prof. Takasago Sasaki, with the team of translators who had gathered around him to work on Écrits. The transcription of this intervention by Dr. Lacan was established, beginning with a now lost recording made by Mr. Philippe Pons, Tokyo correspondent for the newspaper Le Monde. It is thanks to Prof. Sasaki who preserved this transcription that this document has come to us. This text was translated into Japanese by Prof. Sasaki, who had it published under the title "Tokyo Discourse," along with Mr. Takubiko Ichimura's translation of "Radiophonie," in a book published by Kobundo in 1985, entitled Discourse of Jacques Lacan. Photocopy pp. 1-21.

Translated by Jack W. Stone.

⁽¹⁾ Dr. Jacques Lacan :

L'École Freudienne de Paris, of which the *Écrits* does not claim to be the program, emerged from two schisms produced within the Paris psychoanalytic group. I call something very general a group, simply the fact that there are some psychoanalysts in Paris. A first schism led to the separation of two things: one was called *l'Institut de Psychanalyse de Paris* the other was called *la Société Française*. When I came to Japan, eleven years ago, I belonged to the *la Société Française de Psychanalyse*. These kinds of schisms are not rare in the history of European psychoanalytic groups. Take the case of the Swiss: they have more than one group and these groups are very loosely affiliated.

It was found that for contingent reasons, linked to some quite secondary things, such as personal rivalries--following one of these the first schism was produced. But also for very contingent reasons, one of these groups did not remain in what is called *l'Association Internationale de Psychanalyse*. This because of personal relations that someone named Princess Marie of Greece entertained with Anna Freud. These personal relations made it so that instead of two Societies being recognized, which would have been the normal case, it was argued from a bit of juridical minutia that we had left in turning in our resignation, which was correct insofar as we had turned in our resignation to the preceding society, but from the formal point of view this excluded us. If the *Association Internationale* had played the normal game, it would have considered this an accident, and it would have recognized us as the other group. This had curious consequences: there were people who remained nostalgic apropos of this separation and who have done everything to get back into this *Association Internationale*.

⁽²⁾ And it is from this that what has developed from ten years of my teaching has taken its importance, in that what I taught was altogether distinct from what gave the tone to what was done in the sphere of Anglo-American psychoanalysis. This is nothing surprising, Freud foresaw it; Freud foresaw that psychoanalysis would undergo a very important inflection from being taken into the American society's system of thought. There are traces of this in his written work. He foresaw the thing. And things happened this way in the most clear-cut fashion. Someone like Heinz Hartmann, who was the law for the New York Society, clearly said that the program of psychoanalysis, of its work and teaching, should consist in re-entering the frameworks, the concepts, of what he himself calls general psychology. This is a thing that has been written and said and constitutes the program of the American school, insofar as it follows the New York movement — and the whole of the American school follows it at a greater or lesser distance. The United States is very large, and this offers a certain diversity; nonetheless,

something remains of the imperative methods the German emigrants inherited from a certain academic style which is that of Germany. It is certain that this group, whom I knew very well, since I had seen them in the years preceding the war between '33 and '38 – I had seen them all pass through Paris; I mean I was even occupied with them – gave American psychoanalysis its impetuous beginning with the war.

The fact of what happened in '63, out of an imperious need manifested among some people who were my colleagues, professors at the Sorbonne, to re-enter *l'Association Internationale*, which had made them make some concessions on the subject of what in my teaching radically distinguished it from the law that gave its tone to American psychoanalysis and of which one can say, for example, that Anna Freud, in her fashion of treating the psychoanalysis of children, pushed things to a degree⁽³⁾ that harmonized very well with the program of the New York Society.

It was at that moment that in these conditions and having seen the turn things took, I myself said that I would no longer continue the teaching I was giving and which was, it must be said, the true life of *la Société Française de Psychanalyse*; it is obvious that it was my teaching that gave it its weight and its tone. There was no one except me to give a teaching there properly speaking. What was brought in by the Sorbonne professors, whom I need not name, was truly of the order of a repetition of some, I must say, quite threadbare themes, which did not manifest any great fecundity. It was after this that I declared that I did not have to continue my teaching in the conditions that prevailed. I did so without any guarantee of what was to come.

It was found that at that moment they proposed that I pursue my teaching in a certain 6th section of *l'École Pratique des Hautes Études* where it is found that I am the colleague of people like Lévi-Strauss. Faced with the fact that some people who had been my students remained with me and did not take the return route to the *Société Internationale*, I found myself, if I can say so, in charge of them and I founded what is called, what I have called, since it is I who gave it its name, *l'École Freudienne de Paris*. It is certain that in calling it Freudian in these conditions, I mean in separating myself from an international association that claims to have the monopoly on the Freudian legacy, I would offer myself to a contestation, even a legal one on this occasion. It is remarkable that there has been no trace of one. I mean that no one in Paris has dared contest that my teaching was Freudian. That is what I can say of the current situation of the *École*.

There are many people, even in the other groups, who see little advantage in being affiliated with *l'Association Internationale*. I know more than one who never step foot into the congress and who have a certain aversion for these⁽⁴⁾ manifestations. What is certain is that all of those who, on whatever basis, have tasted of my teaching, even when they belong to another group – for it is found that for reasons of personal ambition, certain of them have legally abandoned me – even they find themselves by their own admission very ill at ease with these manifestations of what dominates in *l'Association Internationale*, where the communication reposes on presuppositions, on principles, on what must also be called prejudices, which is to say, some fundamental judgments that are never debated.

The things stated in these congresses put them very ill at ease from the moment they find themselves organizing their practice around certain principles that I articulate (*énonce*), and of which I must mark, I must stress, that it is not nothing, all this construction, let us say, that I have made in the course of these years; this has endured for a bit of time and even a little too long for my taste; indeed, we are in the eighteenth year of this teaching. This teaching such as it is, with what there is in it that might seem abstract to you, this all depends, finally, on the ear with which you read these things.

No one among you is a psychoanalyst. This is unfortunate. It could help with certain things. Nonetheless, since this psychoanalyst would have been trained in accordance with principles that must – I know nothing about them, from which I suppose that they dominate here – something that must emanate in a more or less direct way from the American school, this would also be a difficulty. What makes so hard, for those who have tasted of my teaching, a certain style of enunciation, of aim given to their practice, are these things that appear to you highly abstract – this is the worst term for it; it is not abstract, these are always very concrete things – these things that you may find very difficult to imagine, the experience of what we will call the experience of the couch. That is, what happens when someone is there, in the office of the analyst, on the couch and has entered into this ⁽⁵⁾sort of artifice – for it is quite obviously an artifice, psychoanalysis; one should not imagine it is something that would be the discovery of being or of the soul. In the name of what would this be produced?

Psychoanalysis is not an asceticism (*ascèse*), it is a technique, a very precise artifact destined to enter into something of which it is precisely a question of conceiving the true nature. For it to work in conditions where it works, which is to say when one is in this situation: people come asking for something of which they have no idea whatsoever; what they ask for is something very vague that at least for certain of them has the support of certain symptoms from which they suffer and which they would like to be rid of. The psychoanalyst is then considered a sort of obscure power who should have the means to perform miracles. This obviously is not something on which we play. I mean by this that we must render the justice to psychoanalysis of stating that it does not try to play on this dimension of suggestion and of belief and confidence: of the taking in hand, of the direction of what one calls the patient. If it were that, psychoanalysis would have disappeared from the world a long time ago as has happened to certain other techniques that have played on this human rapport.

Psychoanalysis is a quite precise technique that plays on the rule that one allow the patient to say whatever comes to him to say. Naturally, one orients him a little toward what might be interesting; one teaches him to go a little farther than the relations said to be of admission and behavior (*de l'aveu ne le comportent*). One tells him it will go better if he stop at nothing, even things that might appear to him indifferent or impolite, that he say them, as they come into his head. So that, starting with this practice, something is established that is infinitely richer and more complicated – this has immediately struck those who have taken upon themselves to operate with this practice – what is called the transference.

⁽⁶⁾The transference is then something altogether other than this hook of confidence and faith in the analyst, precisely insofar as one analyses it. One thing is certain: it is that the reality of the transference is something very obscure, and it is better to know what one is doing and to put the accent on what there is of the analysis of the transference. It is quite certain that in theorizing it in a certain fashion, one ends up with some very obscure and systematic things that open onto some impasses. This has always been perfectly established. If one speaks of transference neuroses, it is precisely because one has seen that the transference was not managed as easily as one thought. Managing it in a certain fashion eternalizes it. One establishes something that is in some way a new form of neurosis, which becomes the fabric itself of relations of the one who is analyzed with the one who analyzes him.

What I have taught nonetheless has the effect of allowing us to hear what the patient says in an altogether different way. So as not to complicate things, we will limit ourselves to calling him the patient; which is quite a bad formula, and you should know that I call him the *psychanalysant*; which should not surprise an ear used to the English tongue, despite there being a gerund there, which means “the one who must be

psychoanalysed;” this nonetheless has an advantage over the French word generally used up until now, calling him the psychoanalysed (*le psychanalysé*); because in reality one would be very wrong to call him the psychoanalyzed while he is not psychoanalyzed, and will perhaps not be until the end. While he is not, let us call him the *pschanalysant* in French, which will put the accent a little more on something active, for it is quite certain that the *pschanalysant* is not purely and simply a patient, but that he has a labor to furnish; but it is a question of not letting this labor get lost, of recognizing what happens. It is altogether striking for the people who follow my teaching how many times that people who follow patients – ⁽⁷⁾let us return to the former denomination – or have some in analysis, testify to me of what I say in my most recent seminar, said to them word for word (*textuellement*), as if by a miracle, by a sick person forty-eight hours earlier. It is probable that if not for my seminar they would literally not have heard what the patient said. We are all in on this. There is a way of hearing that makes it so we only ever hear what we are already habituated to hearing. When something else is said, the rule of the game of speech makes it so we simply censor it. Censorship is a very commonplace thing; it is not only produced at the level of our personal experience, it is produced at all the levels of what we call our relations with our peers (*semblables*): what we have not already learned to hear, we do not hear. We fail to grasp that a whole piece, a whole paragraph of what is said, all its particular weight, means (*veut dire*) something that is of course not the text. It is here that we enter into what is important in what I teach: it *wants* to say (*veut dire*) but it does not suffice to want it. One wants to say but what one wants to say generally misses the point. Here is where the ear of the psychoanalyst intervenes insofar as he grasps something of what the other truly wants to say. And what he wants to say is generally not what is in the text.

I do not know what linguistics is in Japan, with what registers you work. In my teaching, linguistics has only an initiatory reference value. It must be said that if I had not had the public I had, of doctors and psychologists, which is to say some absolutely uneducated people – I am not saying linguistically uneducated, I am saying uneducated, period; they know nothing – that is what I had to start with. I had to start from there because this is what in my language the return to Freud signifies. This does not at all mean that we must move back, return to some kind of primal imagination or purity.

⁽⁸⁾If since Freud there have been – and there have – some truly new things, it is certain that I see no obstacle in this but am very interested. For example, it is clear that what Melanie Klein has contributed, despite it being expressed in an absolutely savage manner, is all the same something taken from an experience that is quite gripping and that we must try to understand in a conceptually graspable way and not with the obscurity with which she presents it. Despite everything, it bears the mark of an experience, of a lively experience, of something she dared with children. One can argue with it from the therapeutic point of view, but finally what is certain is that it has given some results and has not had the effects that sometimes, when one hears from the outside how she managed these children – one might believe that it could have some fearful consequences. This is certainly not the case. This analysis is very well tolerated and extremely fecund.

Hence, this is not a return to Freud in himself. It is simply that I think that Freud was from the start read in a way one can read anything that presents itself as new; that is, in pulling it completely to the side of already accepted notions. It was a question of something absolutely subversive. One had at all cost to construct some little mental schemas that allowed one in the final analysis not to budge, to remain on the same thoughts about man, that one could have had on what there is of man, as before. One had at all cost to remain there. So one read Freud in reading in him what one wanted to read and absolutely not understanding what was clearly written there. There were none-

theless three initial books: *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*.

Despite everything, the reader, at least the Western reader, and the Far-Eastern one too I think, had need of the soul. The soul is something that must exist, that is detachable from the body and must have its own rules. I know that for you the tradition is different and that you needed to have⁽⁹⁾ Westerners in the mix (*sur le poil*), if I dare say so, to begin to speak of psychology; there is properly speaking no teaching of psychology here, there is a teaching of a certain number of diverse practices of meditation. But in the Western university, for as long as it existed, which is to say from the end of the High Middle Ages, psychology has taken its place among a certain number of other things and the result has been certain presuppositions that have passed into common consciousness and have become something absolutely essential.

If you do not enter into the reading of Freud with psychological prejudices, and perhaps you will have more luck than Westerners with this, it cannot fail to strike you that he speaks of nothing but things that are words. When one speaks of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, what is it that Freud says about them? From the beginning, he says "the dream is a rebus." When I say return to Freud, I am saying read what is truly written without beginning by trying to see what this ball of thread called the unconscious is and from which some plumes irradiate that would then be the conscious. Do not make schemas still reposing on the idea that there is a substance called soul that has an autonomous life, for this is what can prevent people from thinking: the idea that the soul has its distinct life, and then one sidles up to the idea that it is simply life, and that it animates the body. They read Freud to know that the unconscious is a substance.

The beginning of my teaching – I got mixed up in these things in taking my time, I began in '51; I had behind me twelve to thirteen years of practice: I do not see why I should have taught things prematurely, and it was after a certain experience of being an analyst accompanied by reading Freud, quite deprived of prejudices. It was after this that I chose, given the doctor public I had, for whom this is still more strong than for the others because they are doctors and they are occupied with the body, since finally these bodies are something they know nothing about: a doctor knows less about them than a masseuse;⁽¹⁰⁾ finally, he is enraptured when one speaks to him of the soul. When one explains to them that illnesses are the soul, the doctor-patient (*médecin - malade*) rapport, they are overjoyed: they have found something that is going to justify their existence. Poor things, this is worse still than it may have always been. All this arranged itself very well with the general religious system; finally there is nothing more organicist, that desires more that the histories of the body be resolved by some little mechanisms, that is more inclined toward somatic explanations, than the Catholic church. Unfortunately, it is clear that to the extent biology advances it is complicated by other things than the little summary ideas that have constituted medical tradition. When they simply put at the horizon that, for example, the soul is the doctor-patient rapport, they find themselves a little justified.

Psychoanalysis is not at all made to encourage this tendency and it shows a whole other thing that has nothing whatsoever to do with psychology. That is what must be known. And to know it – since one cannot fight shadows, I do not have to fight with doctors to tell them that their medicine is stupid – I have chosen to see what one can do beginning with what Freud quite superbly knew how to hear. Hear from whom? From none other than his hysterics. At the level of hysterics was produced something altogether exceptional: what are revealed are a certain number of phenomena, I mean mechanisms of these phenomena, noticeable in many others, but which are obscured by all sorts of things, the first of which is psychology itself. What is more psychologizing than an obsessional? He does psychology all day long. It is one of the forms of his sickness.

The hysteric reveals the underpinnings (*les dessous*) of that. The underpinnings consist exactly in this surprising thing that there is for man a certain level of phenomena that one can only explain by means of translation—in the literal sense: it is not a question of transposition, but of translation, and a ⁽¹¹⁾translation can only exist starting with language. Since the dream is a rebus, what indeed can this mean except that beneath the figures of the dream there are words? Either Freud did not know what he was saying or else this must have a sense and the sense can only be that beneath the figures of the dream one must in the end find a sentence. It could be that we are in one of those delusions that have existed for centuries, for we have always worked with dreams in this way. The only mistake we have made was to believe that the rebus was always made up of the same elements: one had to know that when one dreamt of a strong wind or of diarrhea it meant good luck in love, etc.—this was already a rebus but translated in an idiotic fashion; one does not know where these things came from. This is exemplary in the measure that it permits what merits being called a *savoir*. In the history of humanity a *savoir* is always something that has been treated of in a finally very obscurantist fashion. This is what properly speaking distinguishes a *savoir*. In every *savoir*, there is a *savoir-faire*, of which we know well that this is not so obvious.

We have with Freud a chance, a little *aperçu* of something that, concerning certain phenomena, could lead to a certain scientific rigor. It is in this that it appears to me interesting. Besides, it is the only thing justifying the maintenance of those frameworks within which psychoanalysis functions. There is a chance here of a scientific approach to something that it is not a question of defining prematurely as a domain. I am not one to say that this is the beginning of a scientific psychology. What there is of the scientific therein is that we can take support from something the knowledge (*connaissance*) of which is clarified in detaching it from the term itself of *connaissance*. It is another thing. There is a world of difference between a scientific articulation and what I have always placed under the all told naturalist term of *connaissance*.

That linguistics currently has the character of a field in fusion is a thing that must be taken into account of as it is, but about which we all the same have the feeling that we obtain some results on certain points. When Jakobson succeeds in putting in ⁽¹²⁾order the phonemic system of French, it is an incontestable result. It does not illuminate the depths of the soul, of human nature, but it is perfectly operatory. It is what it is possible to articulate phonemically in French. This is an other kind of *savoir* than that *savoir*, which is also a *savoir*, and which is that of every person who speaks French.

What is the nature of the *savoir* that he has in speaking his own language? Just in asking this question every question is opened. What is it to know Japanese? This is something that contains in itself a world of things we cannot say we know so long as we do not succeed in articulating it.

This ambiguity of knowledge, succeeding so well at touching on it at the level of speech, is something that requires all the time it takes to put the fact to the test to account for what direct relation it has with what happens in an analysis. For this is what we deal with in analysis: it is a person who tells you some things and you grasp to what point he knows that they are ambiguous, what is implied by what he knows in what he says, and of which finally he hasn't the least idea, for in a certain way of listening to it you grasp that you are hearing a whole other thing.

This would be an altogether obscure operation if Freud had not made, in these three books of which I speak, the altogether precise analysis of a certain number of facts; for I have just spoken of the dream, but there are also all sorts of stumblings which have this quality, the fact of chance, for example the fact that you did not find

your key in your pocket when you came home or on the other hand you pulled out your key when you came to the home of someone else; Freud shows us that behind these acts which have the air of acts of fatigue or distraction, there is a declaration. It will say for example "if in going to the home of this person I pull out my key, it would mean that I am at my own home." And this can only be understood if it means that. But the most important thing is what follows. The "I am at home (*chez moi*)" is not just any "I am at home"; there is ⁽¹³⁾ more than one way of being at home (*chez soi*) somewhere, and this precisely bears the mark of something that gives the true position of something that one can call thought . . . for the moment let us say "x." I have the audacity to call this "x" the subject.

Obviously this subject has a history that appears greatly to contradict what I am saying. But it is clear that one must choose: or else the subject is what a certain Western tradition has very well delimited, something linked to the fact that it seems that you cannot think without at the same time knowing that you think.

What is it that Freud brings us? That there is a whole world that it is a question of knowing how to qualify and that we must manage with a very great precaution, since I have told you that we must begin by rejecting all there is of the mental apparatus implied by substantializing concepts (*concepts substantiels*) like the soul, etc. So let us go prudently: let us say what thoughts are; it is difficult not to qualify as thought something that takes on so clear a sense starting from the moment when one knows how to read it.

What distinguishes the unconscious is this: it testifies to a *savoir* and even to a wanting-to-say (*vouloir dire*), a need for recognition, since each of these symptoms is something that wants to say (*veut dire*) something: but to whom? It is clear that on first consideration a dream is addressed to no one; however this is not true, for it is altogether obvious, in the analytic experience, that at the beginning of an analysis, it happens that there are some dreams that are literally addressed to the psychoanalyst. They have this unique value of being the equivalent of the first discourse to the analyst. There is something that begins to want to be said on this plane.

Thus what I want to mark, within the fact that the analytic experience is manifested as situating itself on a side woven by language, is what I call "is structured like a language." Starting from here, it is certain that the distinction signifier-signified is to be managed in a certain fashion, and is profitable for allowing you to grasp certain registers that ⁽¹⁴⁾I try to make you feel. What must be avoided is wanting to separate – and this is why your task is so difficult – this apparatus from the analytic experience, from what marks its limits.

That the analytic experience is itself essentially linguistic in nature, is the unignorable fact (*le fait massif*).

The way I operate with the terms of Saussure – and which, besides, are not from Saussure; the Stoics had felt the need for the *signans* and the *signatum* in logic – has the essential interest of showing that in language there is an apparatus to some extent definable in a material fashion that is irreducible: the fact that language is articulated, proceeds by combinations which by nature are differences; the only definition one can give for what signs are is that they pose themselves as different from all the rest, and in this respect the phonemic apparatus is exemplary. But it is quite obvious that this does not suffice.

That the grammatical apparatus is something essential, is a thing that must be accentuated equally. Need I remind you that in defining terms like *Verdrängung* (repression), *Verneinung* (which is to say, making use of negation), *Verwerfung* (exclusion, the fact of not even articulating something that is certainly situable in the

structure of language), in articulating this, Freud gives us the key to a certain type of grammar? It is a question of knowing if this has the complete character of grammar.

This is precisely what I try to construct with a certain number of little things: it is something they, the linguists, should make use of.. This is to say that I do not at all feel I depend on the linguist. What the linguist brings me, I make of it what speaks (*chante*) to me, which is to say what I can make use of. In the signifier and the signified, it is altogether clear that Jakobson can very legitimately grasp that I make use of of the terms metaphor and metonymy slightly to the side of how he does. ⁽¹⁵⁾As regards negation, linguists would have everything to gain by putting themselves in step with the psychoanalytic experience.

The signifier and the signified are altogether capital. All that is of the apparatus of language is finally included in this distinction. The signified, it must be said, is always an other thing than what the signifier has the air of indicating. The index side of the signifier is very precisely the one that any first approach to a language (*la langue*) consists in passing beyond.

If one believes that "table" means table, one can no longer speak, it is very simple. There is a usage of the word table that is applied to a whole other thing than this plank with four legs, and this is what is essential. Not a single word in the language escapes this rule that what it has the air of indicating is precisely what one ought to detach oneself from to understand what the use of the language is. What is striking is that what makes sense in a word is directly linked – we can demonstrate the connection of what makes sense – with the characteristic fact of language that it is never a simple tracing of things. This is how it makes sense. If table has a sense it is precisely in never purely and simply designating the table. Everything you signify with this signifier is quite certainly linked to two dimensions: metaphor, for example, when I say I am going to make a *tabula rasa* (*table rase*) of some material – there is no table I am going to clear (*balayer*); this metaphor is put in the place of something that I would have to articulate otherwise – and then there is another dimension, which is that if I put the word table in a sentence, it will take from my sentence a color and a dimension that is at the same time individualized, if one dissects (*découpe*) the sentence, and the least individualized thing in the world if one considers the whole (*l'ensemble*) of my discourse. The word table can have for me a quality and a function that gives it a palpable place (*une place sensible*) that is a constant of my personality. If one puts the word table in the expression "*se mettre à table*," which is to say, to speak before the police, one sees to what point the inclusion of the sentence in the ⁽¹⁶⁾effect of signification is dominant in the sentence. The signified is something that demands we look twice before we speak of it.

It is all the more difficult to speak of it in that one can never do so except with words, which is to say one cannot escape them. If you do not begin with the notion that there is no metalanguage, which is what I teach, you will fall into all the traps. There is no metalanguage, which is to say that the more one speaks language the more one mires oneself in what one can call its flaws and impassés. I am doing no more here than giving a sampling of what a certain usage of linguistic terms implies: a usage in which I do not feel myself at all dependent on the linguist. I am doing what suits me, and up to a certain point, if I write as I write, it is beginning with my never forgetting, never forgetting that there is no metalanguage. At the same time as I state certain things about the discourses, I have to know that in a certain fashion this is impossible to say. It is precisely in this that it is real.

And this is why these *Écrits* represent something that is of the order of the real. I mean that it is forced that they are written like this; I do not mean to say by this that they are inspired; on the contrary, this was precisely because each was the fact of

singular conjuncture, because I was asked for something for a certain revue and I tried to condense six months of my discourse into it. This *écrit* is obviously not what I said; this is something that in fact poses the whole question of the relations between what is spoken and what comes into writing. What is certain is that I could not have written it otherwise and it was certainly not for it to end up in a book; this is why I put *Écrits* in the plural. Each is the emergence of something that – it too – has a certain rapport with language.

To take up some metaphors, each of these *écrits* seems like the little rocks one sees in Zen gardens. That represents this. Me, I have raked about and found that something presents itself as a rock. A very composite rock but concerning which the principal thing is that I was dealing with ⁽¹⁷⁾an enormous amount of stupidity and inertia. This is the definition of the human being: it is a cauliflower of stupidity. But this is only one aspect of the question. The other aspect is that this is also a rock that has a great deal (*les plus grandes choses*) to do with discourse. Something that discourse in raking around can succeed at encircling. This is what I just called the impossible to say, which finally is what we always seek to say. One must not be mistaken. There is a trap here. It is to believe that this rock is addressed to someone. This is the trap we have fallen into for centuries. It is not because this rock is only situated by the raking of discourse that the rock is addressed to whomever. This is precisely the beauty of these gardens: it is precisely that they are addressed to no one. But no one seems to have grasped this, at least until now. On the other hand, the raking itself, which is to say discourse, is addressed to someone I call the big Other.

When I told you a little while ago to whom symptoms are addressed, it was quite obvious that they are addressed to a place where quite obviously there is no one. The big Other does not exist. But all that is inscribed in language is only thinkable in reference to the big Other. This is what radically distinguishes what is of the imaginary from what is of the symbolic.

You have some examples of what is of the imaginary: it suffices to see two combattants at work, two characters fighting a duel. In what is of the order of this taking (*prise*) of an action of one image by another, there is no way of distinguishing what is a feint from what is true. The feint is the action itself. Feigning is what one does when one fights a duel; feigning is not lying. Feigning is what one has to do in this stranglehold. All is ruled by this fundamental thing, as true for the animals as for men, that in this kind of so mysterious real that one calls life, this imaginary functioning is absolutely essential. The capture, the taking by the image is a radical thing. No life is thinkable without this dimension.

⁽¹⁸⁾ But in discourse this is altogether something else, for discourse only has a function because it is situated somewhere, in a third place, where it is affirmed as truth. There is no way of making a lie without supposing this dimension of truth, while in the feint there is no trace of a lie. It is the *prise* itself of body-to-body. The thought of what the big Other represents in relation to all that might be dual, and, of course, there are not only dual relations; I am only taking this as a particular case because it is the most simple; if we put in three, it becomes like gravitation: it takes on an extreme complexity such as no one has succeeded in resolving even on the terrain of gravitation.

As for so-called communication, there is nothing that seems more to lead us astray than what nonetheless appears obvious, that it is impossible to give a correct schema for what one calls communication and which begins as the a,b,c of cybernetics, that is, limiting things to emitter and receiver. It is obvious that even at this level itself, when people express themselves, when they speak of communication, there is a third element that is the code. Where does this code come from? Here is where the difficulties begin. This code is not without an indicative value for what I have called the big Other.

Only, it is quite obvious that, in a domain like that of psychoanalysis, one cannot be content with this, since it is precisely here that it is demonstrated that one operates with a code that is altogether ungraspable. They are structured like a language, these things that are to begin with symptoms, but the code, in this thing that nonetheless operates like a language, the code, we are incapable of putting our hand on it.

We are capable of putting our hand on a structure that is defined in a fashion such that it determines a certain function of the subject that has some properties, some particular liaisons with *savoir*, and puts *savoir* in question. Clearly it is here that the coming into play of this weft (*trame*) called the Freudian unconscious, it is here that we can grasp its rapport with the least known (*connue*) thing there is, what we ⁽¹⁹⁾ call sexuality. What is it that analytic experience demonstrates if not that we are led by the text itself to grasp that in the constitution of this code, this code so ambiguous in regard to *savoir*, there is a function that has to do with sexual relations.

This demonstrates that this is a rapport altogether complicated in that it has this ternary structure that I say to be essential to language. Here again we must be careful (*se méfier*), for it is a ternary structure that we cannot call this, for none of these terms is at the same level. There is no relation between the emitter and the receiver, supposed his peer (*semblable*) – supposed his peer in the imaginary – but not at the symbolic level for the simple reason that, contrary to appearances, it is from him that the message comes: receiving his own message in inverted form.

The principal characteristic of what I have called the big Other, this indispensable place for thinking even what is of the order of the symbolic, is that it does not exist. This is why I have written signifier of the big A barred. This is the signifier of the big Other as such. It is a signifier indispensable to the functioning of the whole apparatus. We must certainly never forget that since there is no metalanguage, even in saying something like this we are saying something that must necessarily escape us, not be manageable.

It is not because it is articulated that it is articulable and this is why I do not articulate it but write it. Writing is something different from articulating with the voice, contrary to what certain people say who have taken their material from what I teach and who are in the process of articulating in a truly stupefying fashion that written language is first in relation to spoken language. This is absurd. It is quite certain that there is a spoken language and a written language, and it suffices to distinguish this: that written language is very probably not of language. This is not to say that it has not had a very great influence on language. This is even why it has had a great influence on spoken language. It is like the remainder (*reste*) of what language has business with, ⁽²⁰⁾ it is an other thing. The importance of *Kanji* is precisely that it is like a thing, which does not mean that language attains to it more than to any other thing. Language turns around it. This does not contradict my saying that there is no metalanguage: one writes S(A), which is to say, Signifier of A barred – one absolutely must write A and then bar it for this to make a signifier – without this signifier all that is of the order of communication is unthinkable and in particular the analytic experience.

What the analytic experience shows is that the sexual rapport is not thinkable without something third, which is certainly not the big Other in this case, but this entity around which the function of castration turns, and that I note here also solely in a written fashion with the big Φ to designate the function third, in the sexual rapport, of the phallus. That is where we are, which is to say we have not much advanced.

There is no chance that psychoanalysis will lead to anything whatsoever, advance in its construction: it is on this term that Freud completes his writings, that psychoanalysis (*elle*) escapes the kind of rumination (*ressassage*) constituting analytic publications – one has simply to have the experience of reading the *International*

Journal of Psychoanalysis, which appears at the same time in London and New York, to confirm that these publications always tell the same story and in the same terms, which rather has the effect of opacifying things. There is no chance of progressing if not by way of tightening our grip on what there is of the experience, to see what the material that is operative in it is made of and on which analysis finds itself perfectly dependent.

For it is certain that the analyst is implicated in every analysis. And this is why analysts are so decided that things will not advance, for their situation is already quite sufficiently disagreeable, in the current situation, for them not to have any desire to aggravate it. When it is a question of becoming the rock itself, this poses many other problems and ⁽²¹⁾this is what it is a question of for the analyst, but he does not want at any price to become this rock.

The great ambiguity is in the dual relation, and if there is a chance that we might advance in what there is of our rapport with our *semblable*, it is indeed psychoanalysis that can show it to us. This in the measure where it is more than our *semblable* that we have in front of us, it is our neighbor (*prochain*), which is to say, what we have most at the heart of ourselves. This was grasped well before psychoanalysis, but it was seen on a plane that is not that which interests us, since it is on the scientific plane that it is a question of seeing it.

Which does not mean that non-scientific *savoir* has not been capable of attaining to some things that have a direct rapport with *jouissance*. In psychoanalysis, one can aim for what there is of *jouissance* and it is very probably in this that it has an initiatory function. Science, which proceeds from a putting out of play, from a putting of *jouissance* out of its field, can find in psychoanalysis its knot, its link, its pedicle, its articulation.

This is what makes psychoanalysis interesting, what allows this accumulation of clouds called the human sciences to gather around (*fasse autour*) it. I do want psychoanalysis to have something to do with the human sciences, on one condition, which is that the human sciences disappear, that one grasp that psychoanalysis is no more there than the thread, the peak, that allows this accumulation to have a semblance (*semblant*) of existence. But as soon as something functions in its center, nothing more can remain of what are currently called Human Sciences.

For now, psychoanalysis must survive; this is a grave problem. Will it survive when I am dead?